

Regional Music Preferences on Spotify

A Comparative Analysis of
US and Korean Playlists

By Yuna Lee





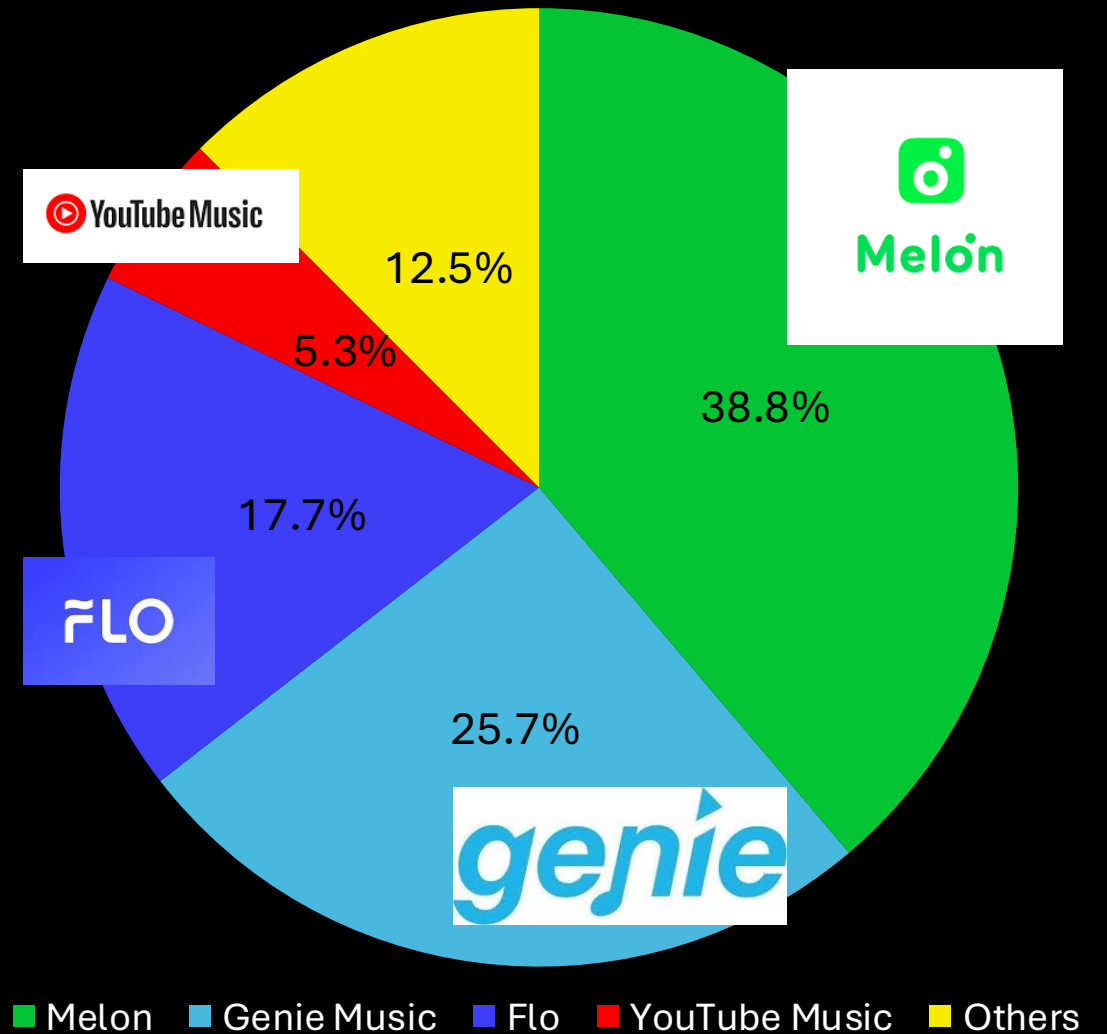
Market Context in Korea

Why is Spotify Less Popular in Korea?

While Spotify dominates the US market, it only accounts for 2% of the Korean music streaming market.

- **Late market entry:** Spotify launched in 2021, free tier only introduced in 2023.
- **Strong local competitors:** Melon, Genie, YouTube Music.
- K-pop streaming strategies differ with companies promoting their artists differently on each platform.

Market Share of Korean Streaming Apps





Business Problem

For a global music platform like **Spotify**, understanding regional music trends is crucial to:

- **Improve personalised recommendations** to suggest relevant songs and artists based on user location and preferences.
- **Optimise marketing strategies** to identify which artists and genres to promote in each country.
- **Guide licensing and acquisitions** to decide which artists, albums, or labels are worth investing in for different markets.
- **Enhance content curation** to create region-specific playlists to increase user engagement.

Aim of Project

Comparing Music Trends in South Korea & USA

Using Spotify's Top 50 charts from South Korea and the US, we aim to:

- Identify local hits vs global popular tracks.
- Analyse artist distributions per country.
- Compare popularity scores of artists across both regions.
- Visualise data for actionable insights.





Solution: Data-driven Insights for Music Trends

Step 1:
Data Collection

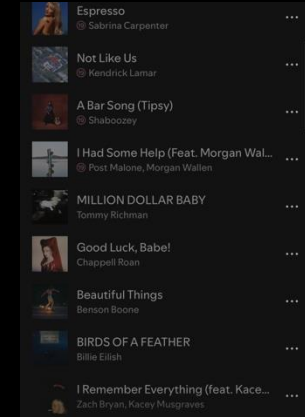
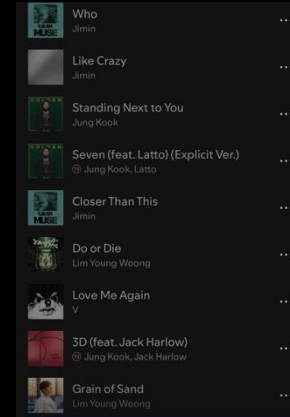
Step 2:
**Data Analysis and
Visualisation**

Step 3:
**Business
Recommendations**



STEP 1: Data Collection

- Top Tracks of 2024 playlists in Korea and US.
- Use Spotify API to collect data.



STEP 2: Data Analysis

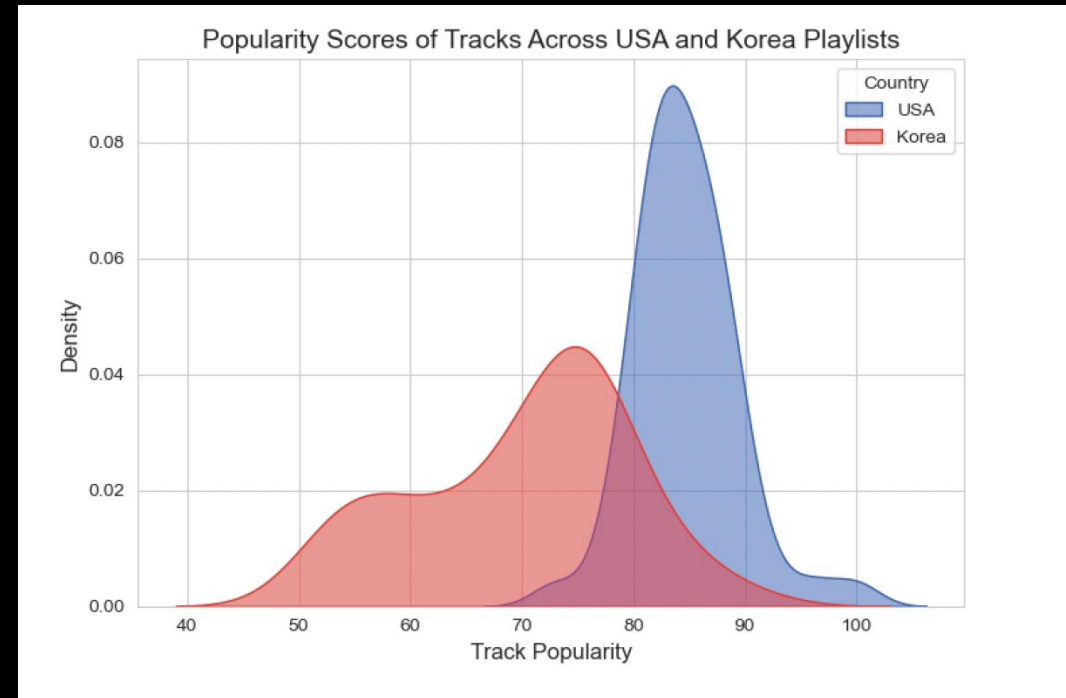
TRACKS

- Only **one** track overlaps:



'Who' by Jimin

- This suggests that **Spotify's Top 50 charts are highly region-specific**, with almost no crossover between the two markets highlighting distinct listening preferences in each country.



- Tracks in the US playlist generally have higher popularity** than those in the Korean playlist.



ARTIST

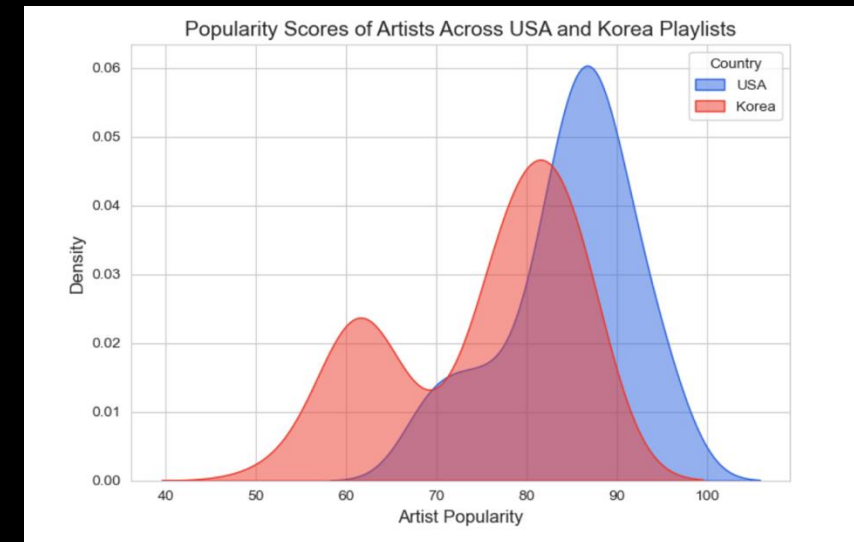
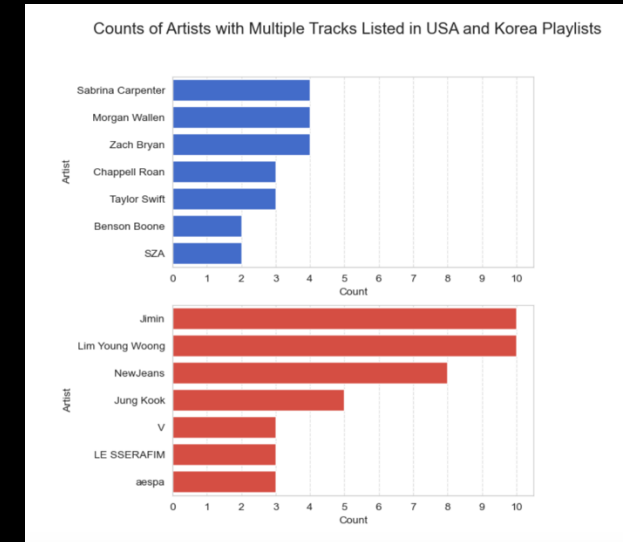


BTS



Lim Young Woong

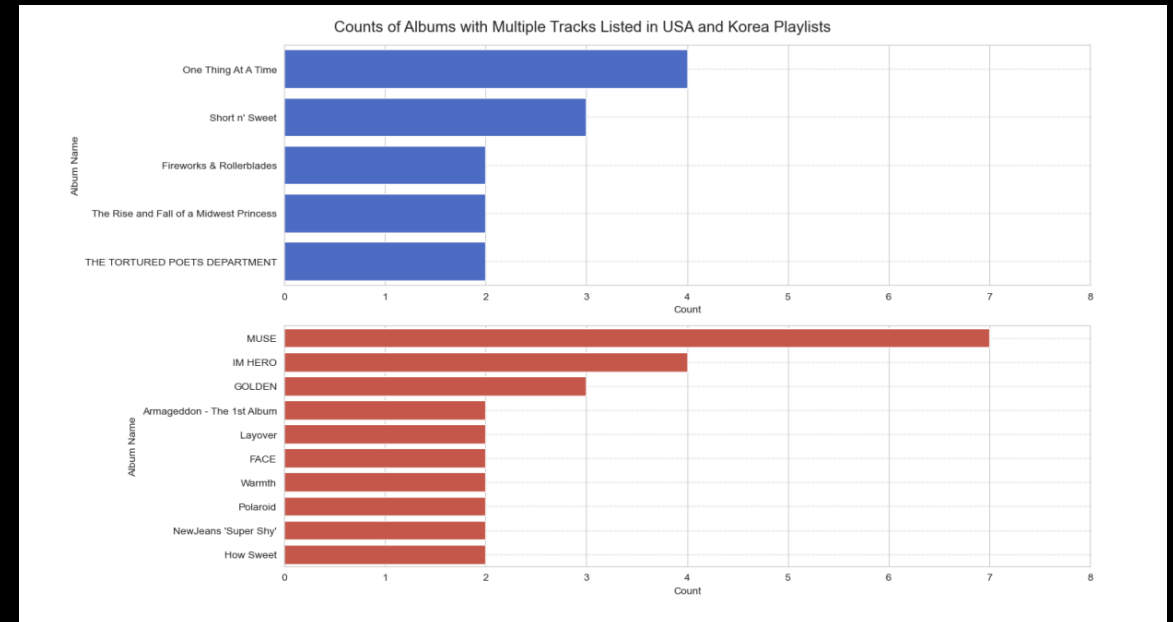
- The **US** playlist features a more diverse set of artists, with no artist contributing more than 4 tracks.
- The **Korean** playlist is dominated by a few key artists, particularly BTS and Lim Young Woong, showing BTS's major influence in Korea.
- Lim Young Woong's popularity points to an expanding older demographic on Spotify in Korea.
- Artist popularity scores in Korea show distinct peaks due to a few dominant artists, while the US playlist features more evenly distributed artist popularity.





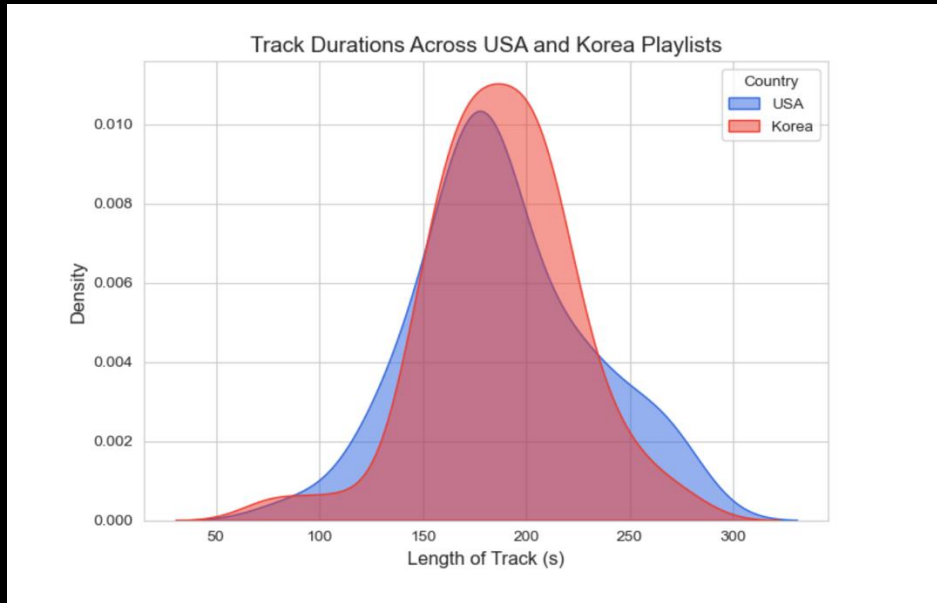
ALBUM

- The **US playlist is more diverse**, with fewer albums dominating the playlist.
- The **Korean playlist has tracks from fewer albums**, with certain albums like Jimin's MUSE contributing multiple tracks, highlighting the K-pop focus.



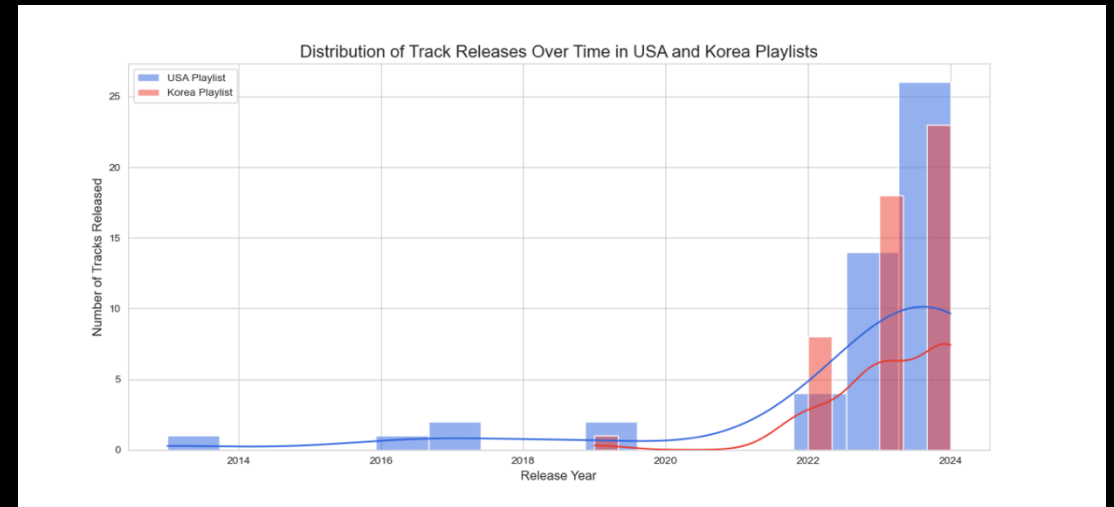


TRACK DURATION



- Similar track durations (~170 seconds or 3 minutes) across both playlists, indicating **no major difference in track length**.

RELEASE DATES



- The **Korean playlist features mostly recent tracks**, with only one track from before 2022.
- The **US playlist includes tracks from as far back as 10 years ago**, showing a broader range of older and newer tracks, especially in **2024**.



STEP 3: Business Recommendations

For Spotify Korea: How to grow in Korea?

1. Target Older Demographics

The success of Lim Young Woong shows a growing interest in Trot music and older demographics in Korea.

2. K-pop Expansion

Given the dominance of BTS and other K-pop groups, continue leveraging Spotify's relationship with K-pop to grow the platform:

3. Increased Focus on Regional Music Trends

Expand the catalogue to cover other regional genres beyond K-pop and Trot, such as hip-hop or indie, which may attract younger or more diverse listeners.



For Advertisers:

What Does This Mean for Music Marketing?

1. Tailored Ads for Different Demographics

Given the diversity of listeners in both countries, music marketers should segment their ads accordingly.

2. Localised Marketing

Create ads that cater specifically to the tastes of each country.

3. Leveraging Exclusive Content

Music marketing should emphasise exclusive content, such as behind-the-scenes videos, artist interviews, and live sessions.